

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please substitute claims 1-25 with the following:

1. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method for reproducing digital signals ~~characterized by~~ comprising the steps of:

~~being adapted to temporarily store~~ storing a data block to be used repeatedly at least twice out of a plurality of data blocks obtained at least by dividing a digital signal on a time base;  
receiving information indicating the period of time during which said data block is retained; and

deleting said data block based on said information.

2. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said digital signal is taken into a recording medium by way of a network before it is reproduced.

3. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said digital signal is stored in a recording medium in advance.

4. (Cancelled).

5. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that said information indicates~~ wherein the period of time ~~from the time begins~~ when said data block to be used repeatedly at least twice is read in ~~to the time when said data block is deleted.~~

6. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said information indicates the number of times of reading other data after reading in said data block to be used repeatedly at least twice.

7. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method according to ~~claim 4~~  
claim 1, ~~characterized in that said information indicates the elapsed time from the time wherein~~  
the period of time begins when the overall processing operation starts ~~to the time when said data~~  
~~block to be used repeatedly at least twice is deleted.~~

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method according to ~~claim 4~~  
claim 1, ~~characterized in that said information indicates wherein~~ the period of time ~~from the time~~  
begins when said data block to be used repeatedly at least twice is reproduced for the first time ~~to~~  
~~the time when it is deleted.~~

10. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method according to ~~claim 4~~  
claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ said information is added to said data block to be used  
repeatedly at least twice as part thereof.

11. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method according to ~~claim 4~~  
claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ said data block to be used repeatedly at least twice is  
deleted when ~~the retaining period of time indicated by said information has passed and the~~  
processing operation for reproducing the digital signal is over.

12. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method according to ~~claim 4~~  
claim 1, ~~characterized in that, wherein~~ if the retaining period of time indicated by said  
information is shorter than the time necessary for actually reproducing said data block to be used  
repeatedly at least twice, said data block is deleted when the operation of reproducing said data  
block is over.

13. (Currently Amended) A digital signal processing method according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said data blocks to which said information is not added are deleted when the processing operation of reproducing them is over.

14. (Currently Amended) A digital processing method according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~, wherein when said information is expressed by a predetermined bit string, said data block to be used repeatedly at least twice is retained until time when the processing operation of reproducing all the data blocks is over.

15. (Currently Amended) A digital signal reproducing apparatus for reproducing digital signals, ~~characterized by~~ comprising:

a first decoding means for separating a data block to be used repeatedly at least twice from the remaining data blocks of a plurality of data blocks obtained at least by dividing a digital signal on a time basis and decoding said data block, wherein said first decoding means extracts information indicating the period of time during which said data block is retained;

a retaining means for temporarily retaining said data block to be used repeatedly at least twice from said first decoding means; ~~and~~

a second decoding means for decoding said remaining data blocks from said first decoding means and said data block to be used repeatedly at least twice from said retaining means; and

control means for deleting said data block from said retaining means based on said information.

16-17. (Cancelled).

18. (Currently Amended) A digital signal reproducing apparatus according to claim 15, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said second decoding means decodes each of said data blocks, using identification information for identifying each of said data blocks.

19. (Currently Amended) A digital signal reproducing apparatus according to claim 15, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said second decoding means decodes each of said data blocks, using said identification information and additionally reproduction timing information.

20-24. (Cancelled).

25. (Currently Amended) A program recording medium carrying a recorded program ~~characterized by comprising:~~

a first decoding step of separating a data block to be used repeatedly at least twice from the remaining data blocks of a plurality of data blocks obtained by dividing a digital signal on a time basis and decoding said data block to be used repeatedly at least twice;

a retaining step of temporarily storing said data block to be used repeatedly at least twice from said first decoding step; ~~and~~

a second decoding step of decoding said remaining data blocks from said first decoding step and said data block to be used repeatedly at least twice from said retaining step; and

a deleting step of deleting said data block based on information indicating the period of time during which said data block is retained.